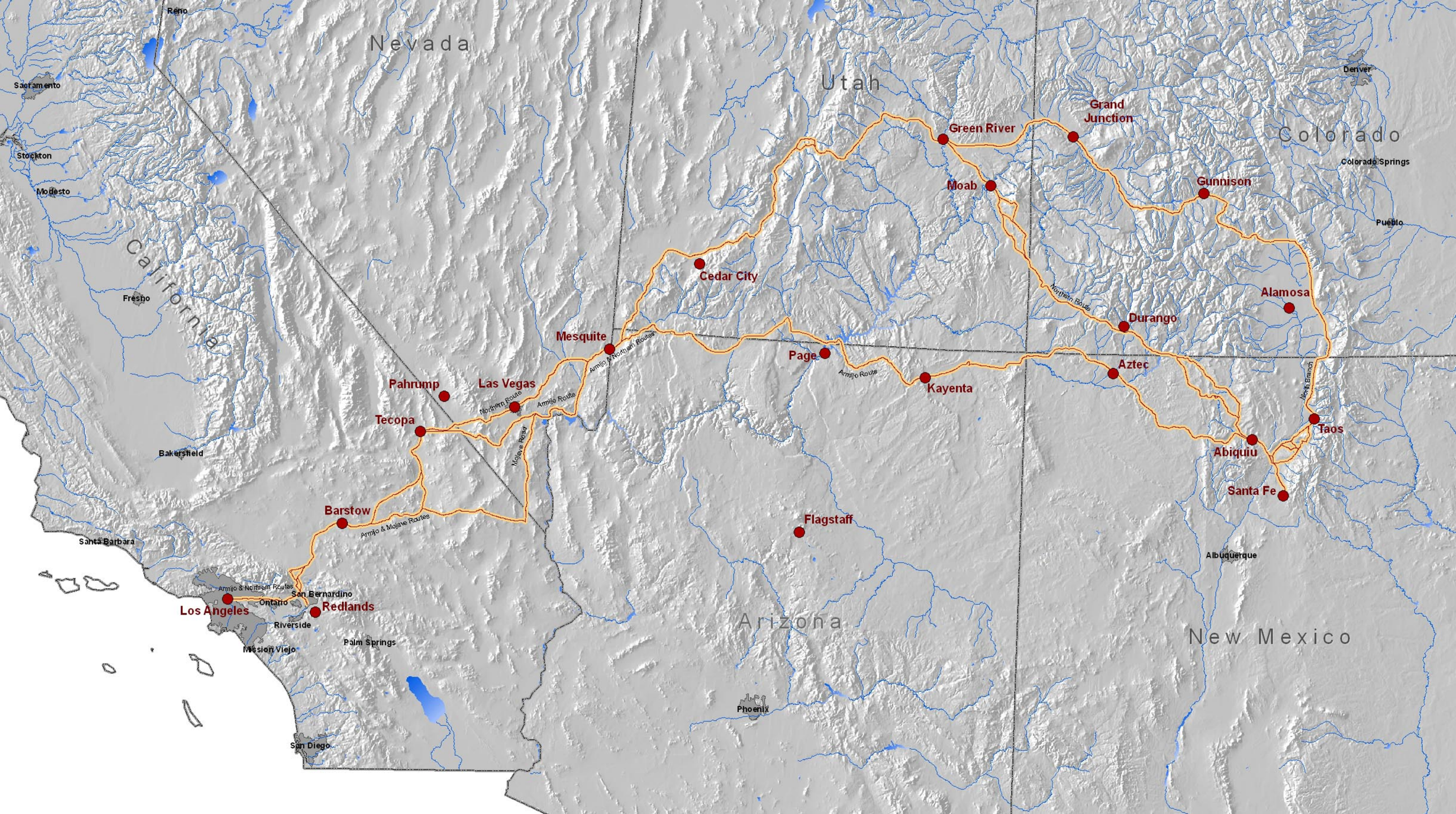

Reno
Nevada
Utah
Denver
Colorado
Sacramento
Stockton
Modesto
Colorado Springs
Pueblo
Grand Junction
Green River
Moab
Gunnison
Cedar City
California
Fresno
Alamosa
Durango
Northern Route
Mesquite
Armijo & Northern Routes
Page
Armijo Route
Aztec
Kayenta
Pahrump
Las Vegas
Northern Route
Armijo Route
North Branch
Taos
Tecopa
Mojave Road
Bakersfield
Abiquiu
Santa Fe
Barstow
Armijo & Mojave Routes
Flagstaff
Santa Barbara
Albuquerque
Armijo & Northern Routes
San Bernardino
Ontario
Los Angeles
Redlands
Riverside
Palm Springs
Mission Viejo
Arizona
New Mexico
Phoenix
San Diego

Exploring the Trail

Timeline

EARLY EXPLORATIONS

1598..... Don Juan de Oñate establishes San Juan de los Caballeros (near modern Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo), the first Spanish settlement in New Mexico.

1610..... Don Pedro de Peralta founds Santa Fe, the new capital of New Mexico.

1765..... Juan María Antonio Rivera leads two parties from New Mexico to explore southwestern Colorado and southeastern Utah.

1774..... Father Francisco Hermenegildo Garcés sets out from southern Arizona to explore a path to the California missions. He follows the Mojave River and reaches Mission San Gabriel.

1776..... Franciscan priests, Francisco Atanasio Domínguez and Francisco Silvestre Vélez de Escalante follow Rivera's route to the Great Basin in western Utah.

1781..... Spanish colonists establish El Pueblo de la Reina de los Angeles in California.

1821..... Mexico gains independence from Spain.

1825..... Antoine Robidoux builds Fort Uncompahgre (Fort Robidoux) near present-day Delta, Colorado, where Indians and traders bargained for goods.

1826..... Jedediah S. Smith leads a small party of fur trappers westward from Cache Valley, Utah.

TRAIL MILESTONES

1829..... Antonio Armijo leads the first trade caravan from Abiquiú to Los Angeles, opening the Old Spanish Trail.

1831..... William Wolfskill and George C. Yount blaze a more northern route that ascends into central Utah before heading southwest into California.

1834..... José Arrieta and 125 men arrive at Los Angeles carrying 1,645 serapes, 314 blankets, and other woolen goods.

1837..... José María Chávez and family settle in what became known as the Chávez Ranne in Los Angeles.

1839..... José Antonio Salazar arrives in California at the head of a group of 75 men; Francisco Quintana carries domestic manufactures worth $78.25.

1841..... Francisco Estevan Vigil arrives at Los Angeles and presents a passport and instructions describing the duties and responsibilities of a commander of a caravan.

1842..... A party of 40 New Mexicans from Abiquiú settles at Agua Manza and Politzna in California; Francisco Estevan Vigil and 194 men are issued passports carrying 4,150 California animals back to New Mexico.

1843..... Juan Arce hauls merchandise worth $487.50.

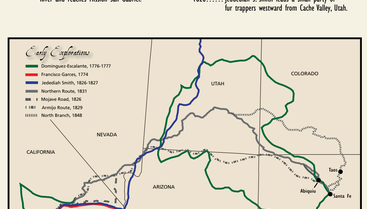
1844..... Francisco Rael carries domestic manufactures and sheep worth $1,748.

1846..... The Mexican-American War begins.

1848..... Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo ends Mexican-American War; the Southwest becomes U.S. territory; California Gold Rush begins

1849..... Commercial caravans across the Old Spanish Trail largely cease as more direct transportation routes develop

2002..... The Old Spanish National Historic Trail is designated by Congress



Earlier explorations provided essential knowledge about the lands and cultures between Santa Fe and Los Angeles. As trading opportunities opened up, traders sought the quickest and safest route.

Three Trails

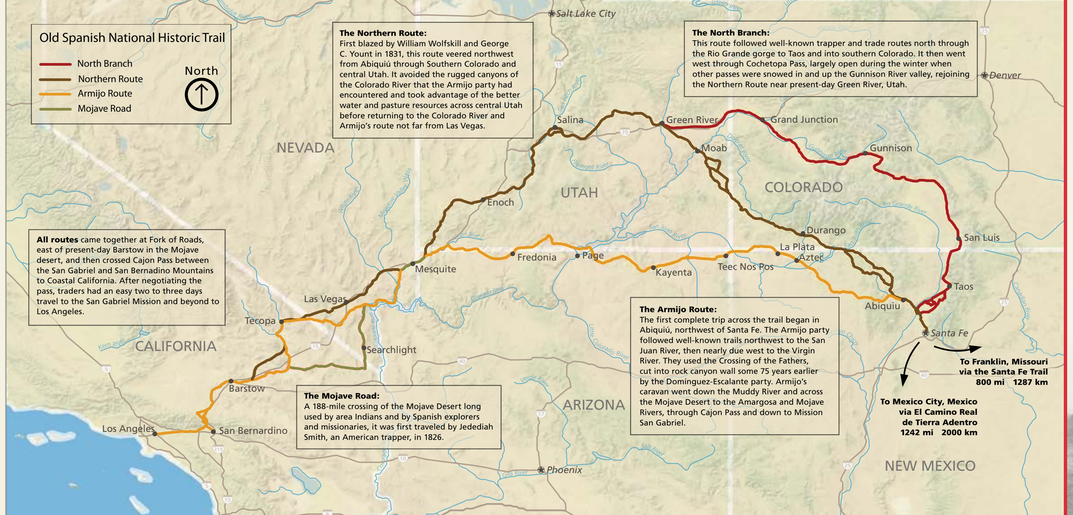
Three trails, including the Old Spanish Trail, merged in Santa Fe. El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro (the Royal Road to the Interior Lands) was a wagon road between Mexico City and Santa Fe. The Santa Fe Trail, an international wagon route that crossed the plains, linked Missouri with Santa Fe.

The trails witnessed dramatic growth in use after 1821, when a large and broad array of merchandise came to New Mexico from the Eastern United States and Europe. Merchants took many of these products further into Mexico along El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro.

Old Spanish Trail Travel

The Old Spanish Trail's rugged terrain discouraged the use of wagons. It was always a pack route, mainly used by men and mules.

Traders used different routes from trip to trip, depending on weather and water. Caravans left New Mexico in the late summer or fall and returned from California in the spring. Early winter snows blocked mountain passes and travelers chose their routes accordingly. In the spring, traders worried about late snows and floods. On every trip, they worried about water and forage, often racing to beat other caravans to known sources.



The Northern Route:
First blazed by William Wolfskill and George C. Yount in 1831, this route veered northwest from Abiquiú through Southern Colorado and central Utah. It avoided the rugged canyons of the Colorado River that the Armijo party had encountered and took advantage of the better water and pasture resources across central Utah before returning to the Colorado River and Armijo's route not far from Las Vegas.

The North Branch:
This route followed well-known trapper and trade routes north through the Rio Grande gorge to Taos and into southern Colorado. It then went west through Cochetopa Pass, largely open during the winter when other passes were snowed in and up the Gunnison River valley, rejoining the Northern Route near present-day Green River, Utah.

All routes came together at Fork of Roads, east of present-day Barstow in the Mojave desert, and then crossed Cajon Pass between the San Gabriel and San Bernadino Mountains to Coastal California. After negotiating the pass, traders had an easy two to three days travel to the San Gabriel Mission and beyond to Los Angeles.

The Armijo Route:
The first complete trip across the trail began in Abiquiú, northwest of Santa Fe. The Armijo party followed well-known trails northwest to the San Juan River, then nearly due west to the Virgin River. They used the Crossing of the Fathers, cut into rock canyon wall some 75 years earlier by the Dominguez-Escalante party. Armijo's caravan went down the Muddy River and across the Mojave Desert to the Amargosa and Mojave Rivers, through Cajon Pass and down to Mission San Gabriel.

The Mojave Road:
A 188-mile crossing of the Mojave Desert long used by area Indians and by Spanish explorers and missionaries, it was first traveled by Jedediah Smith, an American trapper, in 1826.

Explore Today

It is difficult to see traces of the trail in the modern landscape. Most of the routes of the Old Spanish Trail have been reclaimed by nature or changed by later use. However, some of the landmarks that guided trail travelers can still be seen today.

The following sites along the trail offer the opportunity to experience some of the natural landscapes crossed by the trail. They are only a small sampling of places you can visit associated with the trail. You can learn more by visiting the official trail websites.

Arizona:

- Glen Canyon National Recreation Area
- Grand Canyon/Parashant National Monument
- Navajo National Monument
- Pipe Spring National Monument

California:

- Desert Discovery Center, Barstow
- El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument
- Mission San Gabriel, San Gabriel
- Mojave National Preserve
- Mojave River Valley Museum, Barstow
- San Bernardino County Museum, Redlands

Colorado:

- Anasazi Heritage Center/Canyons of the Ancients National Monument
- Colorado National Monument
- Curecanti National Recreation Area
- Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area
- Fort Garland Museum, Fort Garland
- Fort Uncompaghre, Delta
- Great Sand Dunes National Park & Preserve
- Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area
- McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area
- Southern Ute Cultural Center and Museum, Ignacio
- Ute Museum and Memorial Site, Montrose

Nevada:

- Lake Mead National Recreation Area
- Lost City Museum, Overton
- Old Las Vegas Mormon Fort State Park
- Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area
- Springs Preserve, Las Vegas

New Mexico:

- Aztec Ruins National Monument
- Palace of the Governors and New Mexico History Museum, Santa Fe
- Rio Grande Gorge Visitor Center, Taos
- Spanish Colonial Art Museum, Santa Fe

Utah:

- Arches National Park
- Beaver Wash Dam National Conservation Area
- Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument
- John Wesley Powell River History Museum, Green River
- Museum of the San Rafael, Castle Dale
- Dan O'Leary Museum, Moab
- Iron Mission State Park, Cedar City

Trail Administration

The Old Spanish National Historic Trail was designated by Congress in 2002. The trail runs through New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, Utah, Nevada and California. The Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service administer the trail together to encourage preservation and public use.

These two federal agencies work in close partnership with the Old Spanish Trail Association, American Indian tribes, state, county, and municipal governmental agencies, private landowners, nonprofit groups, and many others.

For more information, including more site locations and trip planning tools, please visit our official trail websites:

Bureau of Land Management
Utah State Office
www.blm.gov/ut

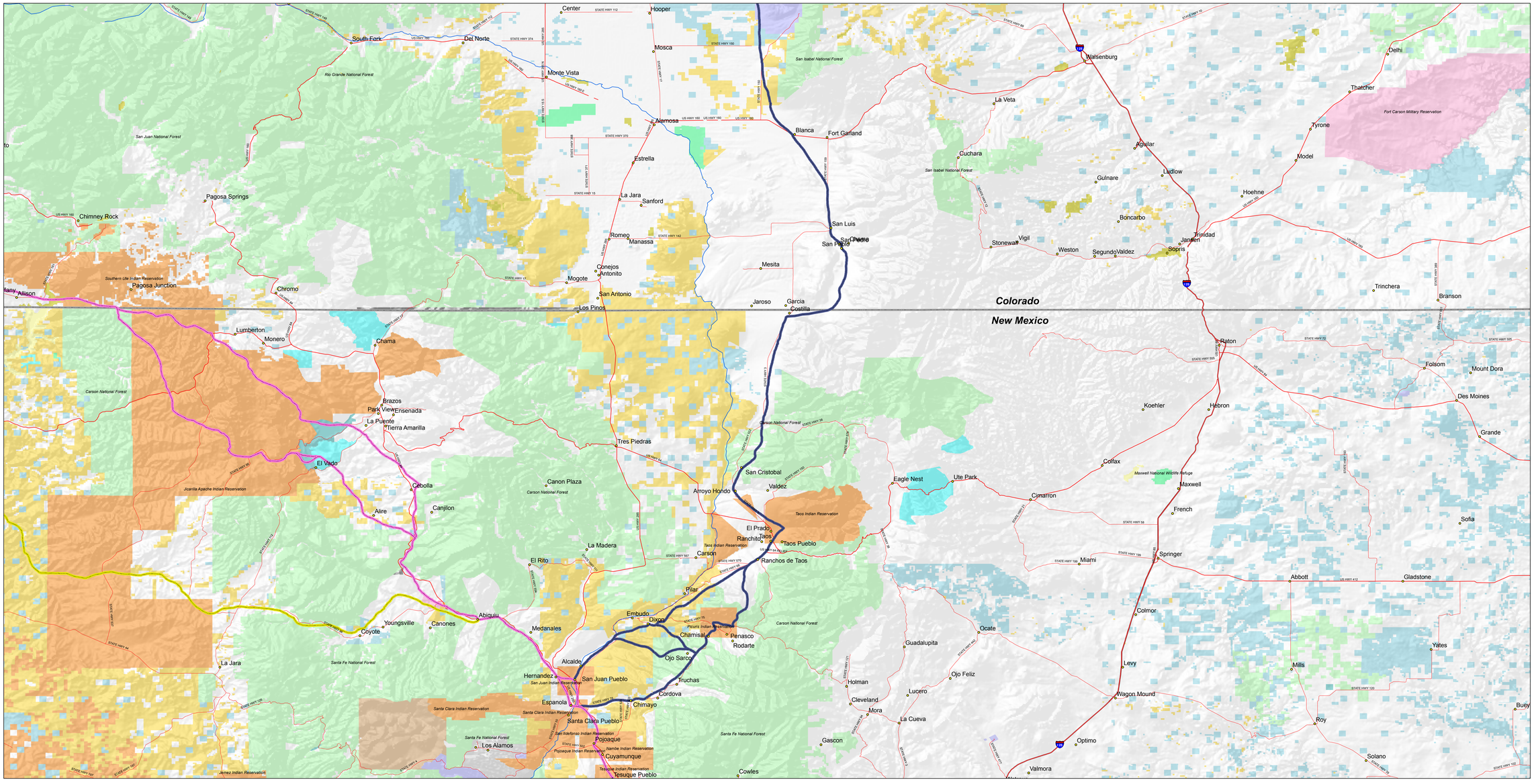
National Park Service
National Trails Intermountain Region
www.nps.gov/olsp

Volunteer Organization
Old Spanish Trail Association
www.oldspanishtrail.org

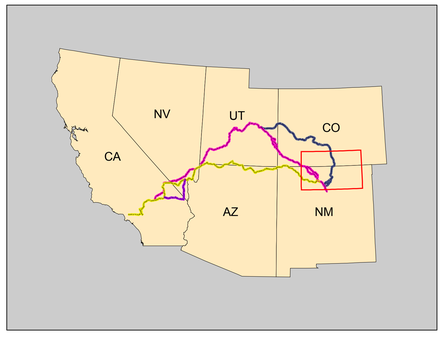
NPS/BLM 05/12

Old Spanish National Historic Trail

Abiquiu Public Scoping Meeting
May 16, 2006



Location of Main Map



0 5 10 20 30 40 50 Miles

0 20 40 60 80 100 Kilometers

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Acc uracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.

Produced by the BLM New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team on March 28, 2006

Old Spanish Trail Route

- Armijo & Mojave Routes
- Armijo & Northern Routes
- Armijo Route
- Mojave Road
- North Branch
- Northern Route

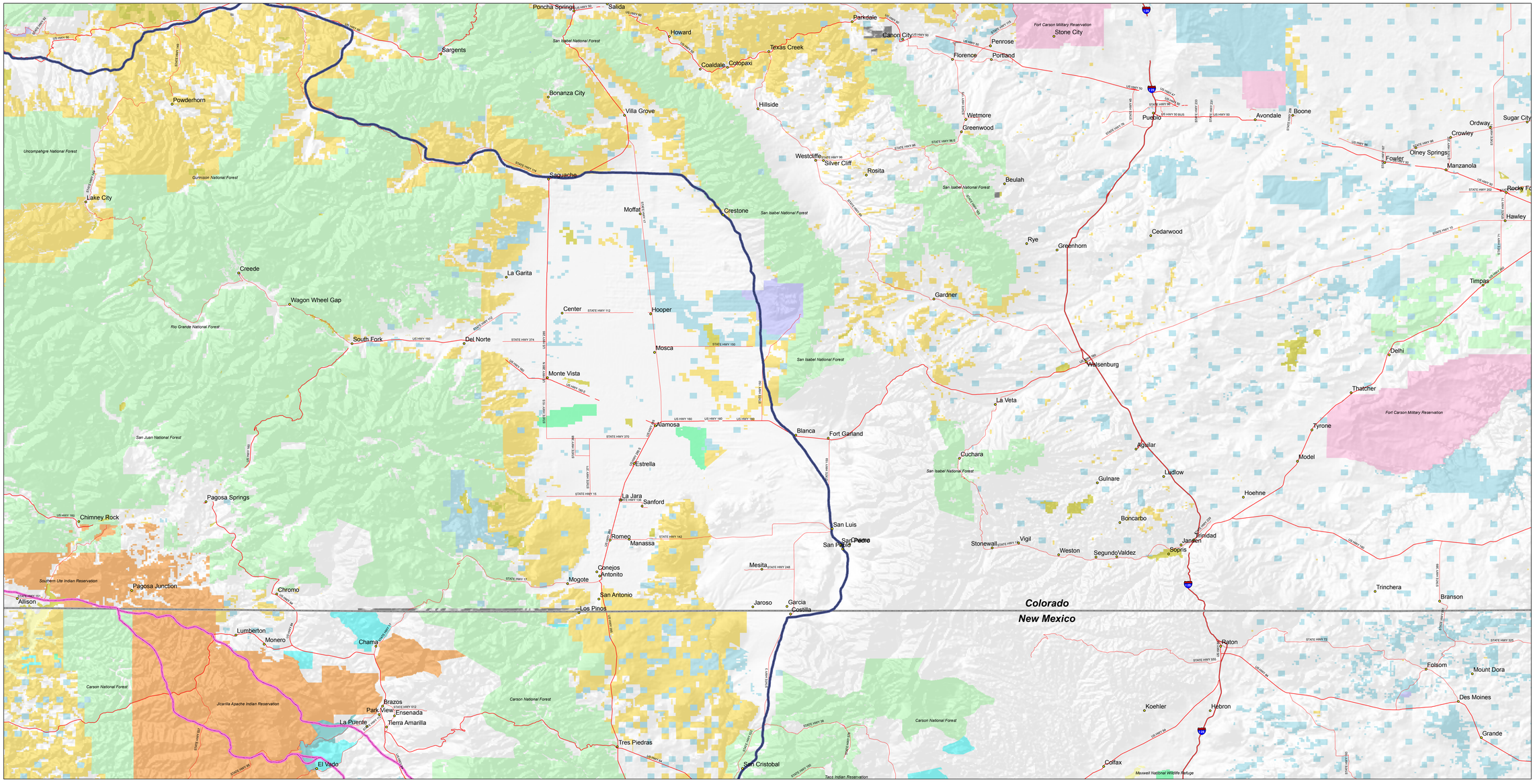
- Bureau of Land Management
- Dept. of Defense
- Other Federal
- National Park Service
- Private
- State
- Forest Service
- Tribal
- Fish & Wildlife Service

- State Boundary
- State Highway
- US Highway
- Interstate Highway
- River

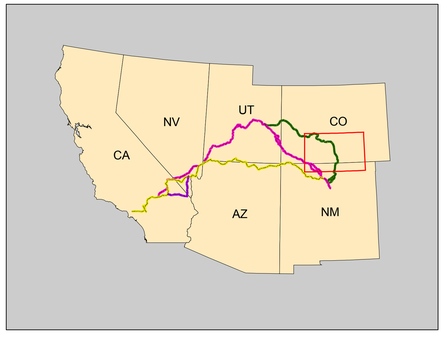
Old Spanish National Historic Trail

Alamosa Public Scoping Meeting

March 1, 2006



Location Map



0 5 10 20 30 40 50 Miles

0 20 40 60 80 100 Kilometers

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.

Produced by the BLM New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team on March 28, 2006 .

Old Spanish Trail Route

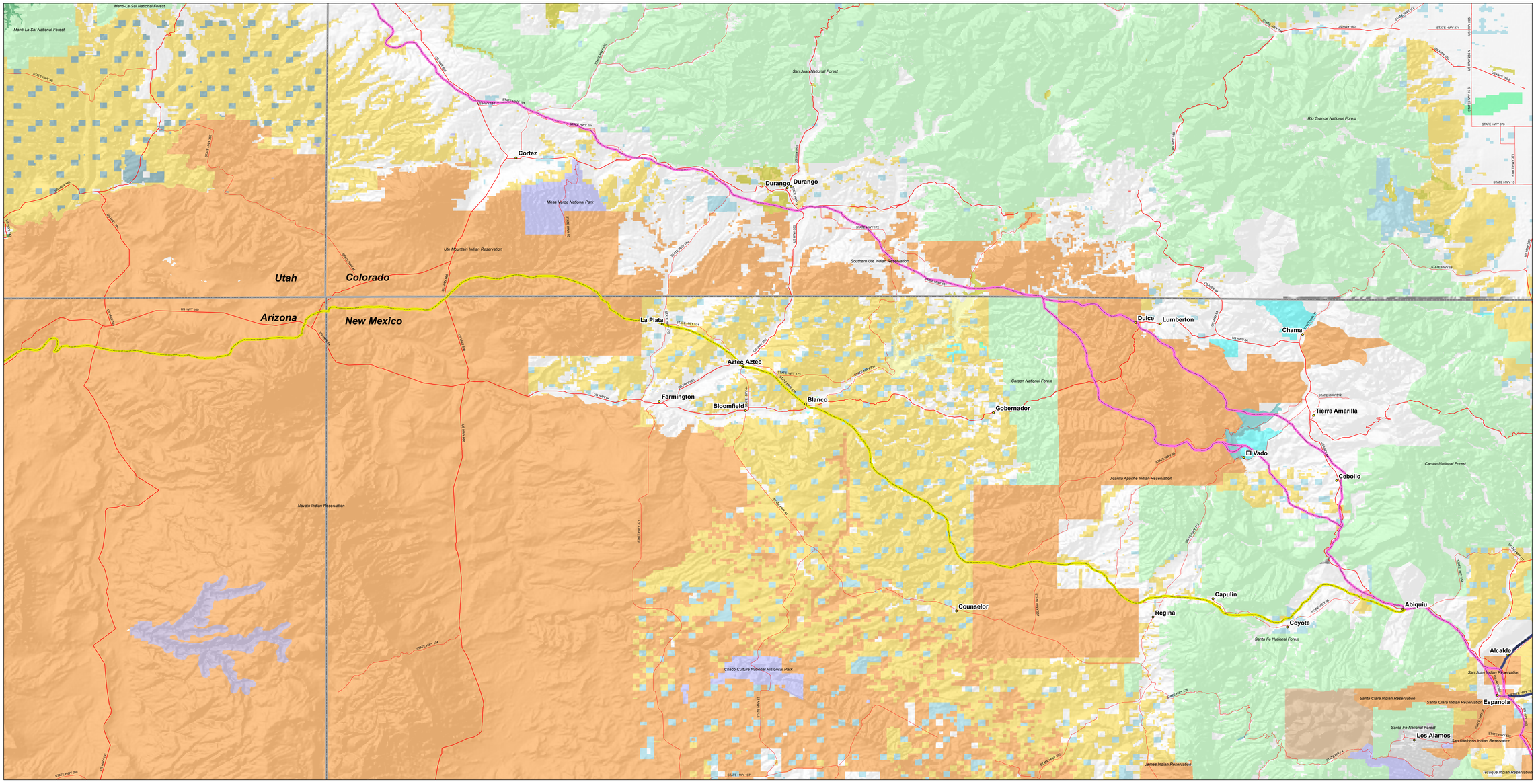
- Armijo & Mojave Routes
- Armijo & Northern Routes
- Armijo Route
- Mojave Road
- North Branch
- Northern Route

- Bureau of Land Management
- Dept. of Defense
- Other Federal
- National Park Service
- Private
- State
- Forest Service
- Tribal
- Fish & Wildlife Service

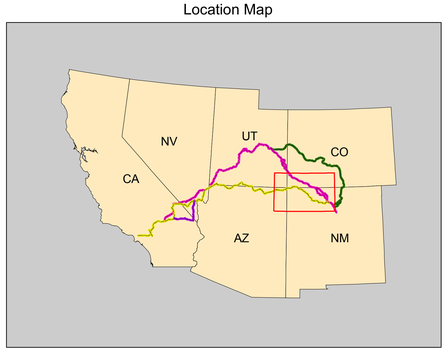
- State Boundary
- State Highway
- US Highway
- Interstate Highway

Old Spanish National Historic Trail

Aztec Public Scoping Meeting
February 27, 2006



Location Map



0 5 10 20 30 40 50 Miles

0 20 40 60 80 100 Kilometers

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.

Produced by the BLM New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team on March 28, 2006 .

Old Spanish Trail Route

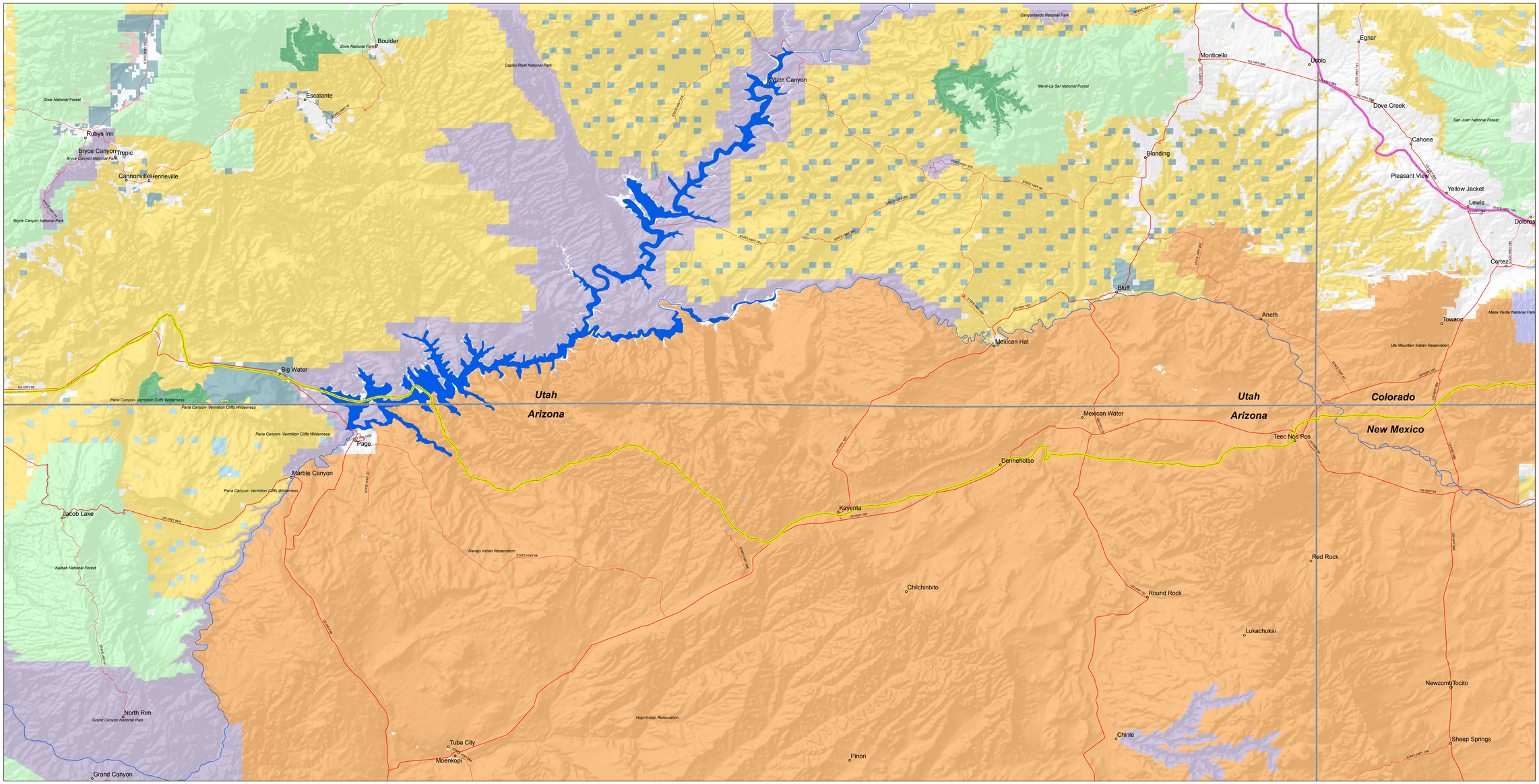
- Armijo & Mojave Routes
- Armijo & Northern Routes
- Armijo Route
- Mojave Road
- North Branch
- Northern Route

- Bureau of Land Management
- Dept. of Defense
- Other Federal
- National Park Service
- Private
- State
- Forest Service
- Tribal
- Fish & Wildlife Service

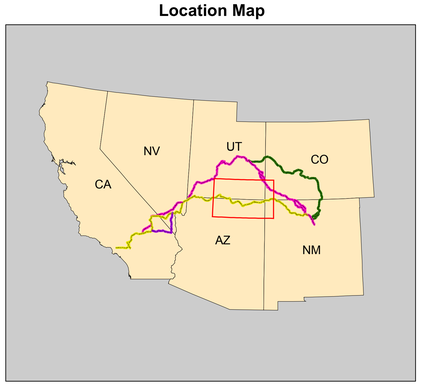
- State Boundary
- State Highway
- US Highway
- Interstate Highway

Old Spanish National Historic Trail

Kayenta Public Scoping Meeting
March 22, 2006



Location Map



0 10 20 30 40 50 Miles

0 20 40 60 80 100 Kilometers

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.

Produced by the BLM New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team on March 29, 2006 .

Old Spanish Trail Route

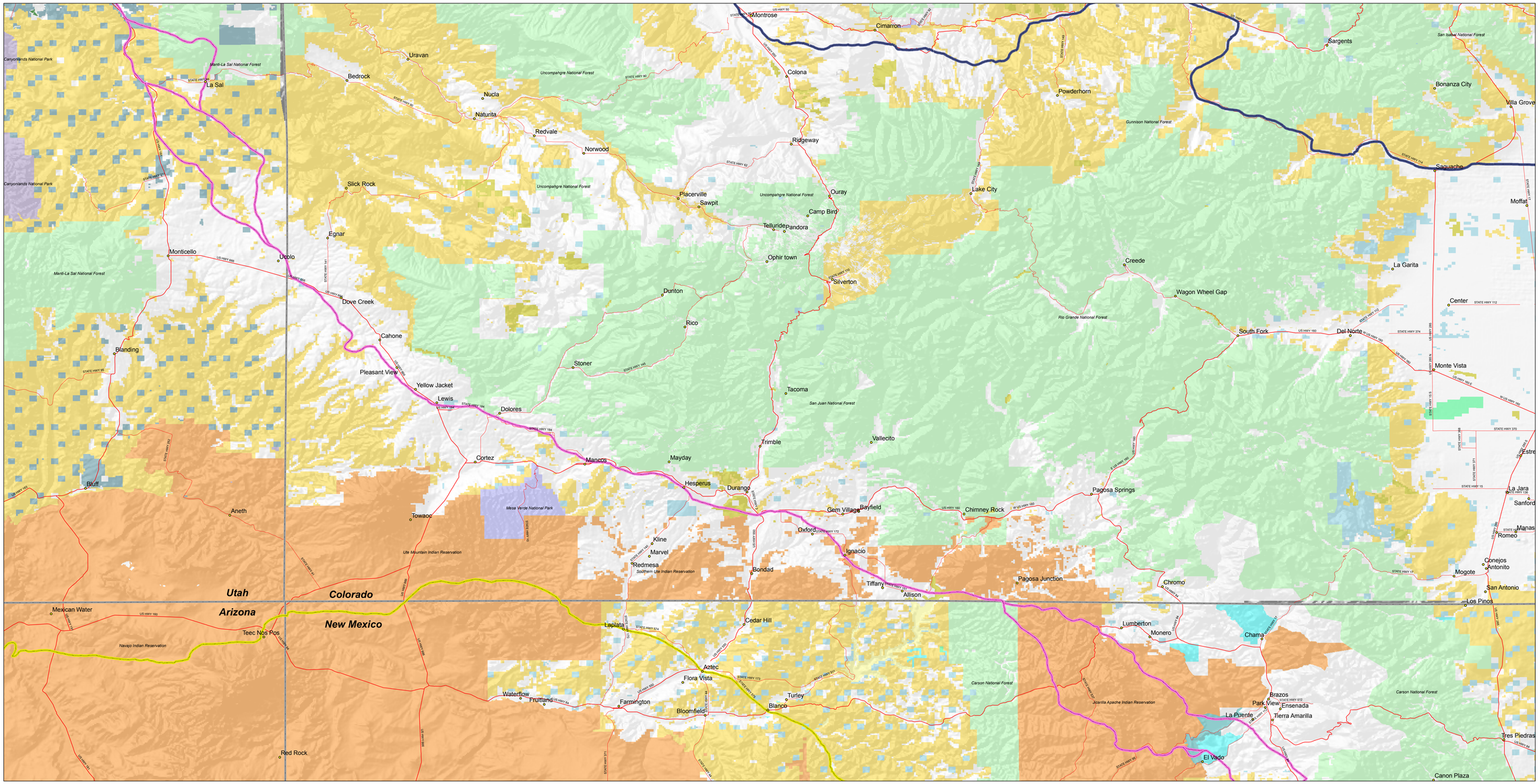
- Armijo & Mojave Routes
- Armijo & Northern Routes
- Armijo Route
- Mojave Road
- North Branch
- Northern Route

- Bureau of Land Management
- Dept. of Defense
- Other Federal
- National Park Service
- Private
- State
- Forest Service
- Tribal
- Fish & Wildlife Service

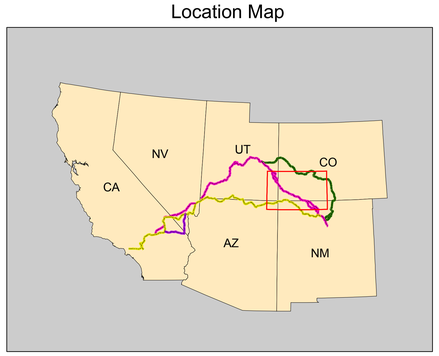
- State Boundary
- State Highway
- US Highway
- Interstate Highway
- River
- Water Body

Old Spanish National Historic Trail

Durango Public Scoping Meeting
February 28, 2006



Location Map



0 10 20 30 40 50 Miles

0 20 40 60 80 100 Kilometers

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.

Produced by the BLM New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team on March 28, 2006 .

Old Spanish Trail Route

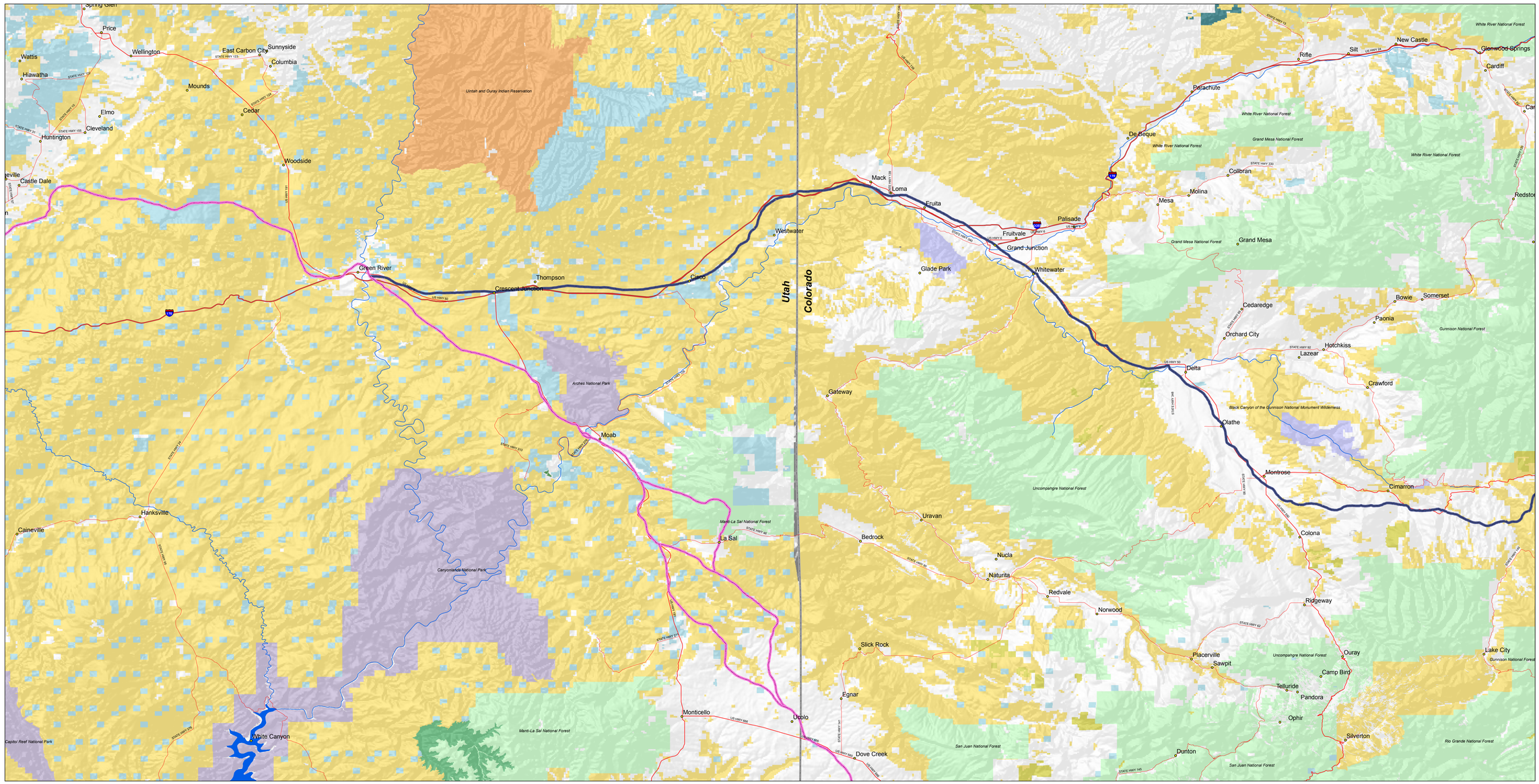
- Armijo & Mojave Routes
- Armijo & Northern Routes
- Armijo Route
- Mojave Road
- North Branch
- Northern Route

- Bureau of Land Management
- Dept. of Defense
- Other Federal
- National Park Service
- Private
- State
- Forest Service
- Tribal
- Fish & Wildlife Service

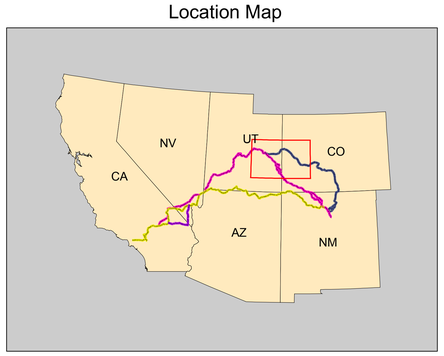
- State Boundary
- State Highway
- US Highway
- Interstate Highway

Old Spanish National Historic Trail

Grand Junction, Colorado and Moab, Utah Public Scoping Meetings
April 17 - 18, 2006



Location Map



0 10 20 30 40 50 Miles

0 20 40 60 80 100 Kilometers

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.

Produced by the BLM New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team on March 28, 2006 .

Old Spanish Trail Route

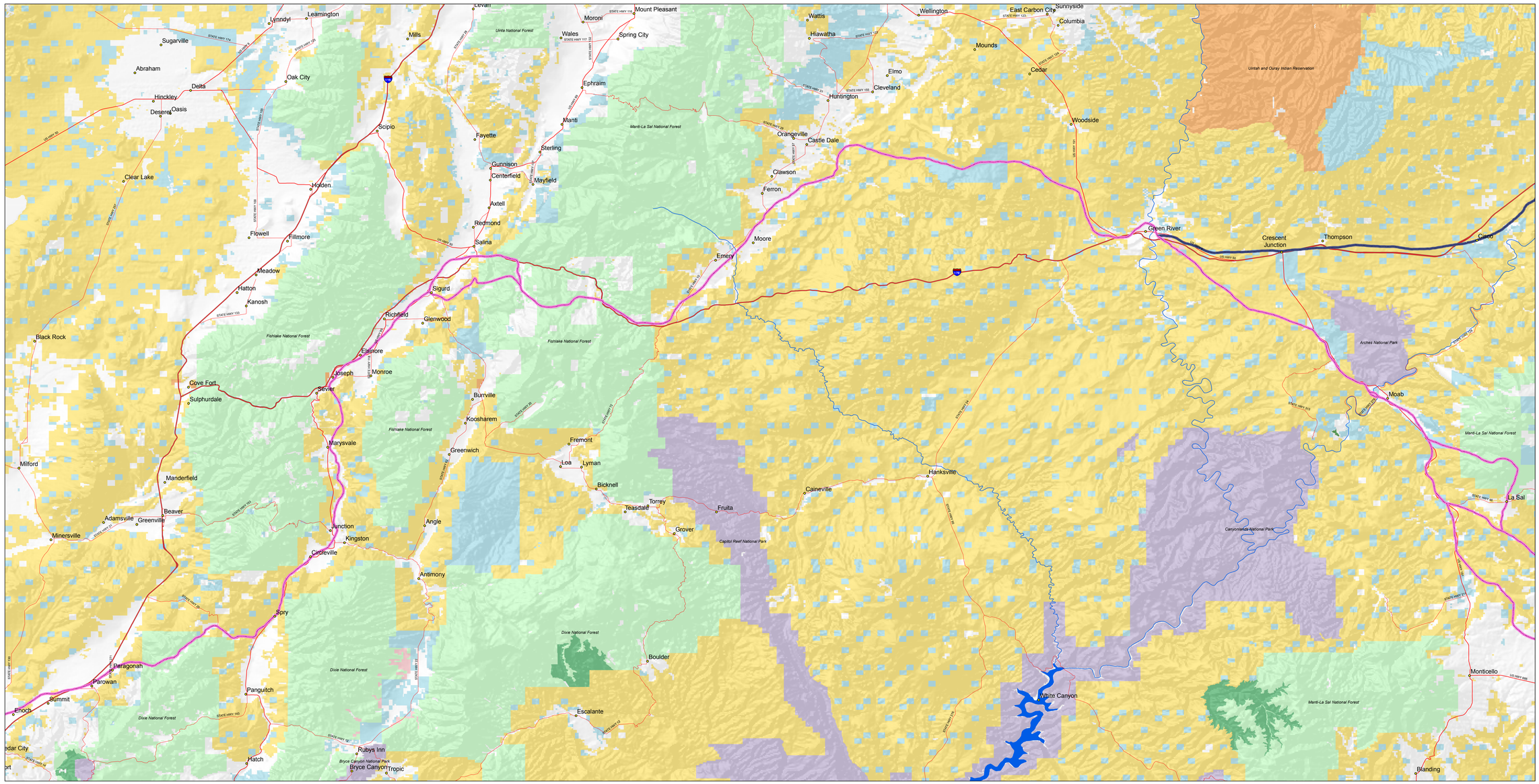
- Armijo & Mojave Routes
- Armijo & Northern Routes
- Armijo Route
- Mojave Road
- North Branch
- Northern Route

- Bureau of Land Management
- Dept. of Defense
- Other Federal
- National Park Service
- Private
- State
- Forest Service
- Tribal
- Fish & Wildlife Service

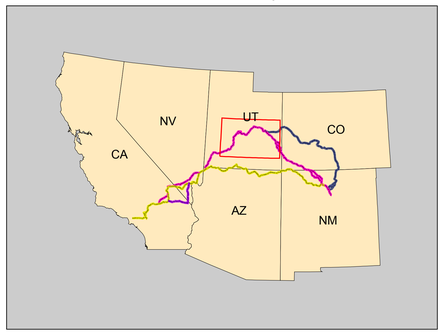
- State Boundary
- State Highway
- US Highway
- Interstate Highway
- River
- Water Body

Old Spanish National Historic Trail

Green River, Utah Public Scoping Meetings
April 19, 2006



Location Map



0 10 20 30 40 50 Miles

0 20 40 60 80 100 Kilometers

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.

Produced by the BLM New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team on April 3, 2006 .

Old Spanish Trail Route

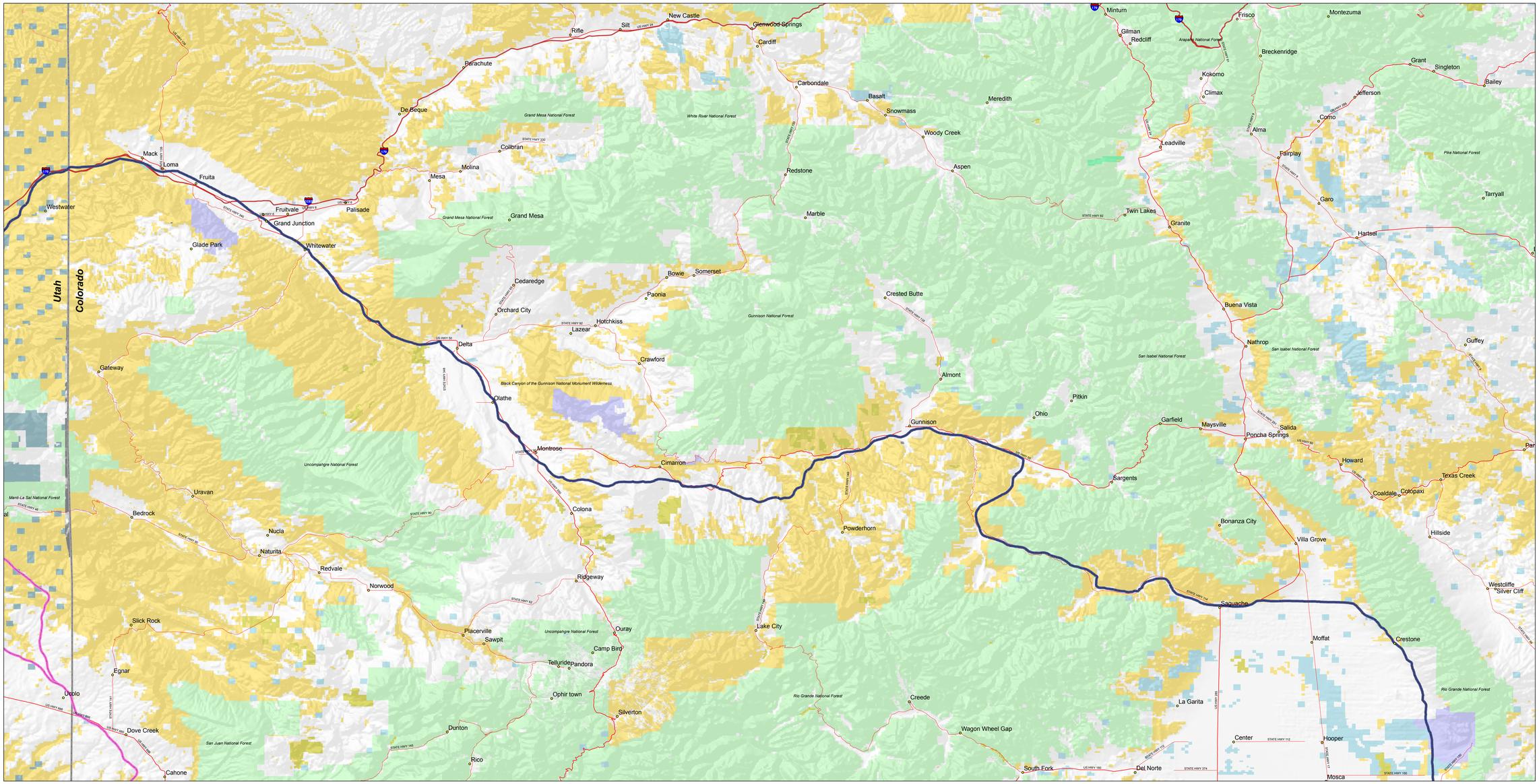
- Armijo & Mojave Routes
- Armijo & Northern Routes
- Armijo Route
- Mojave Road
- North Branch
- Northern Route

- Bureau of Land Management
- Dept. of Defense
- Other Federal
- National Park Service
- Private
- State
- Forest Service
- Tribal
- Fish & Wildlife Service

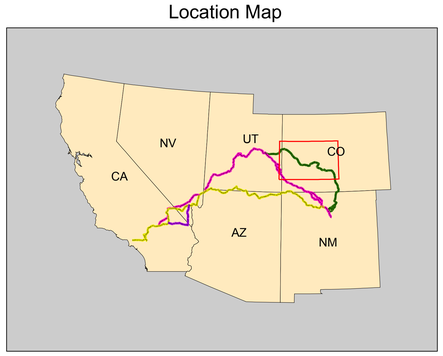
- State Boundary
- State Highway
- US Highway
- Interstate Highway
- River
- Water Body

Old Spanish National Historic Trail

Gunnison Public Scoping Meeting
March 2, 2006



Location Map



0 10 20 30 40 50 Miles

0 20 40 60 80 100 Kilometers

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.

Produced by the BLM New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team on March 28, 2006 .

Old Spanish Trail Route

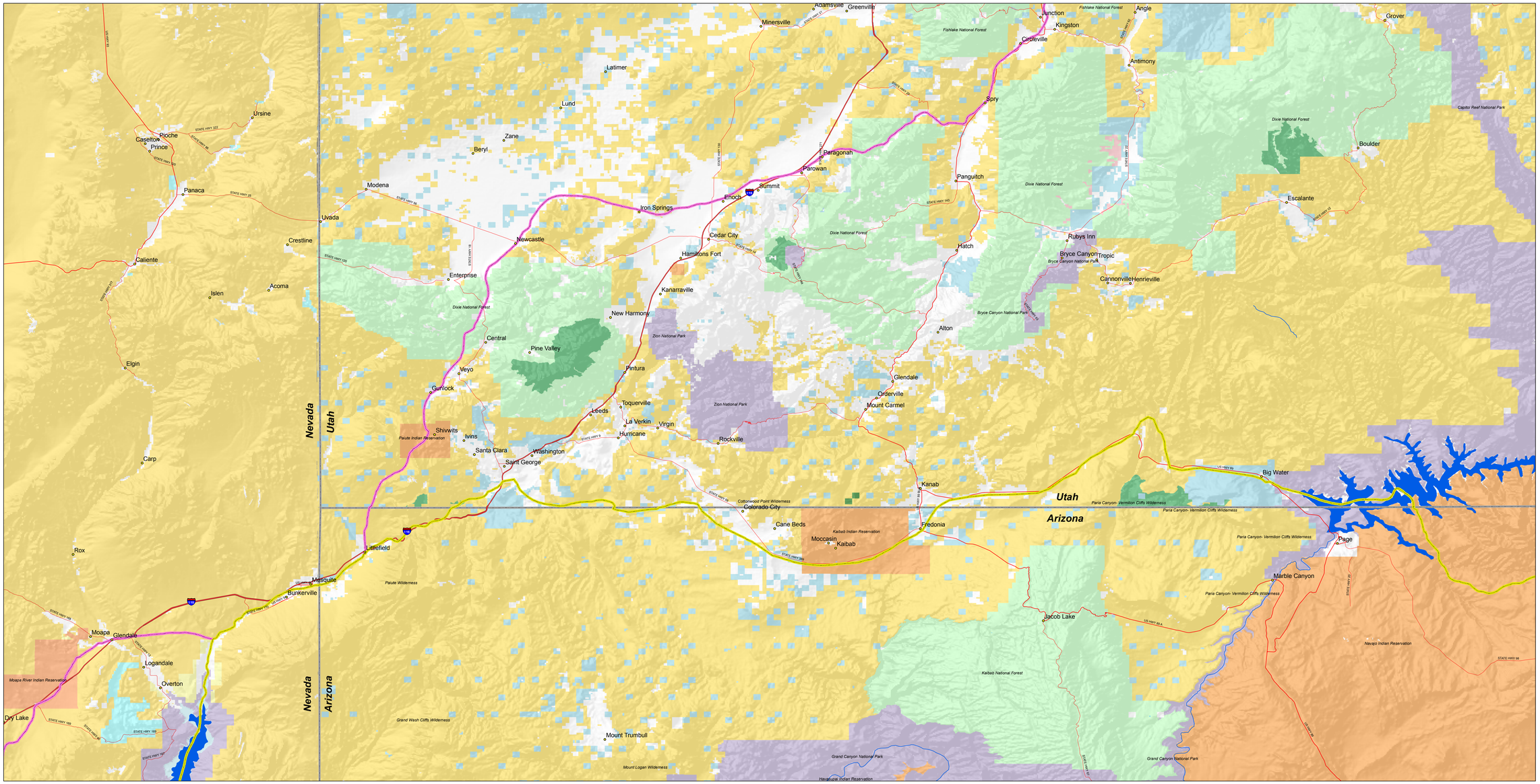
- Armijo & Mojave Routes
- Armijo & Northern Routes
- Armijo Route
- Mojave Road
- North Branch
- Northern Route

- Bureau of Land Management
- Dept. of Defense
- Other Federal
- National Park Service
- Private
- State
- Forest Service
- Tribal
- Fish & Wildlife Service

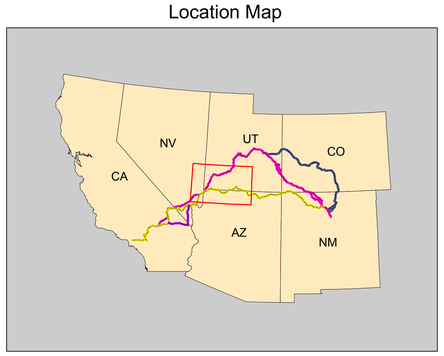
- State Boundary
- State Highway
- US Highway
- Interstate Highway

Old Spanish National Historic Trail

Cedar City, Utah Public Scoping Meetings
April 20, 2006



Location Map



0 10 20 30 40 50 Miles

0 20 40 60 80 100 Kilometers

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.

Produced by the BLM New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team on April 3, 2006 .

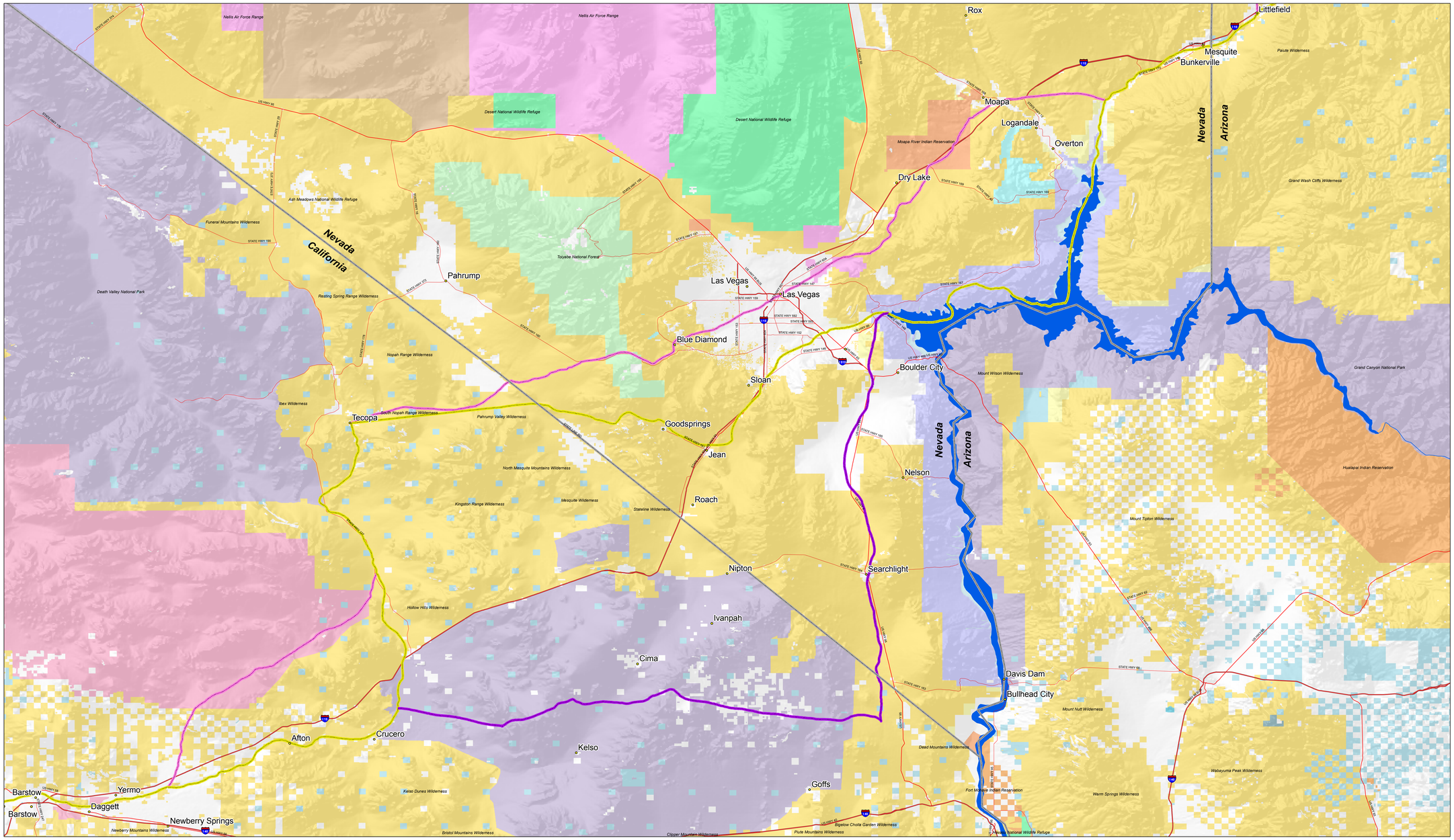
Old Spanish Trail Route

- Armijo & Mojave Routes
- Armijo & Northern Routes
- Armijo Route
- Mojave Road
- North Branch
- Northern Route

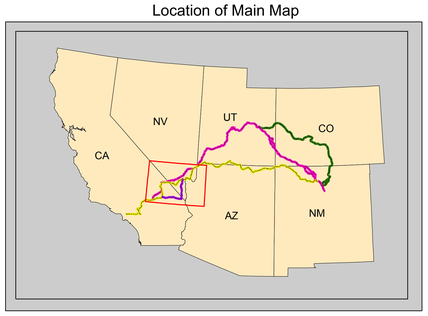
- Bureau of Land Management
- Dept. of Defense
- Other Federal
- National Park Service
- Private
- State
- Forest Service
- Tribal
- Fish & Wildlife Service

- State Boundary
- State Highway
- US Highway
- Interstate Highway
- River
- Water Body

Old Spanish National Historic Trail
Las Vegas, Nevada Public Scoping Meeting
April 3, 2006



Location of Main Map



0 10 20 30 40 50 Miles

0 25 50 75 100 125 Kilometers

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Acc uracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.

Map produced on March 27, 2006

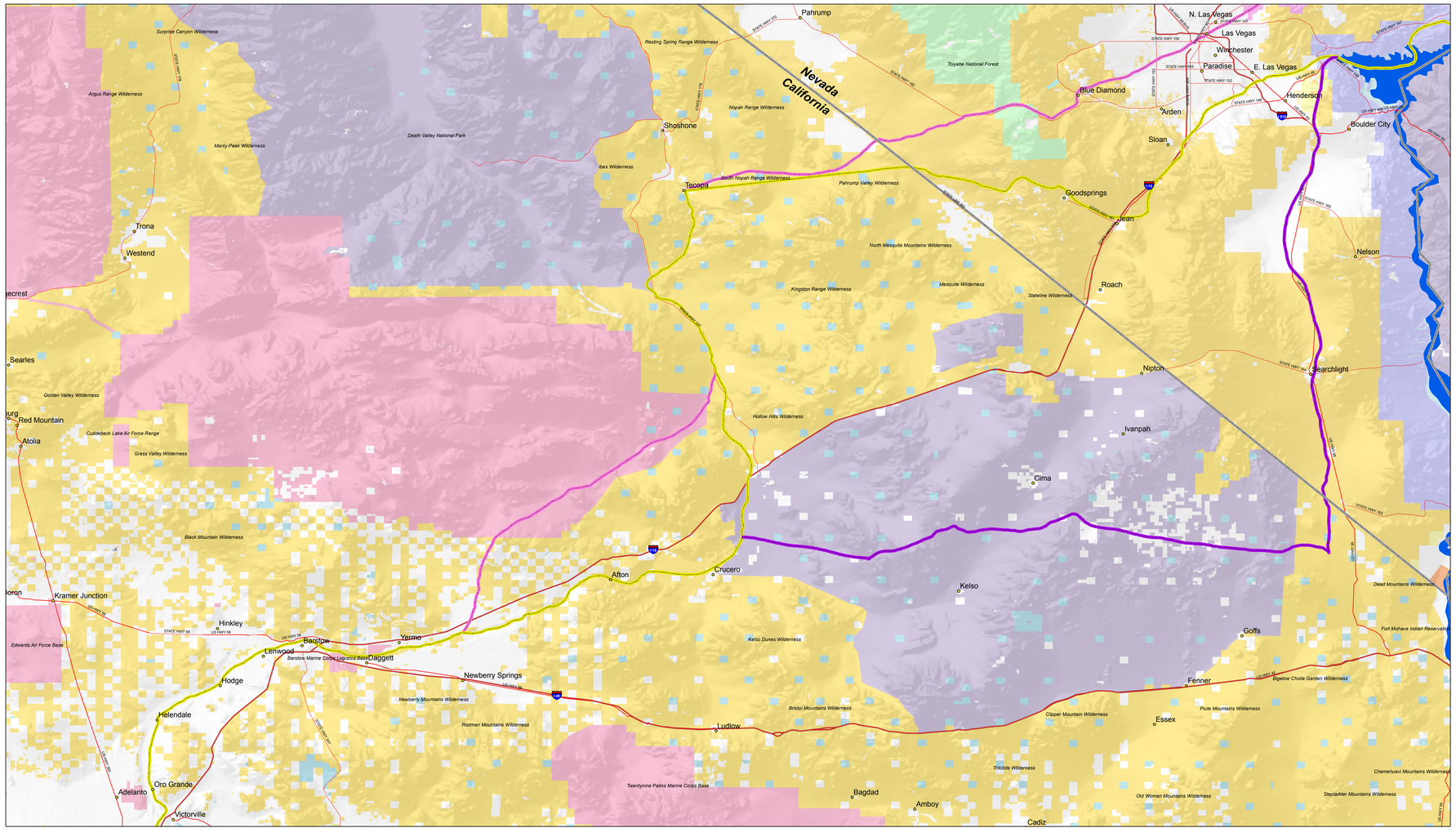
Old Spanish Trail Route

- Armijo & Mojave Routes
- Armijo & Northern Routes
- Armijo Route
- Mojave Road
- North Branch
- Northern Route

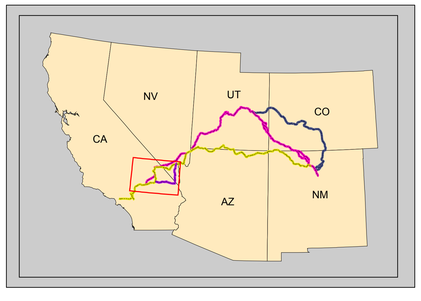
- Bureau of Land Management
- Dept. of Defense
- Other Federal
- National Park Service
- Private
- State
- Forest Service
- Tribal
- Fish & Wildlife Service

- State Boundary
- State Highway
- US Highway
- Interstate Highway
- River
- Water Body

Old Spanish National Historic Trail
Barstow, California Public Scoping Meetings
May 9, 2006



Location of Main Map



0 10 20 30 40 50 Miles

0 20 40 60 80 100 Kilometers

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Acc uracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.

Map produced on March 27, 2006

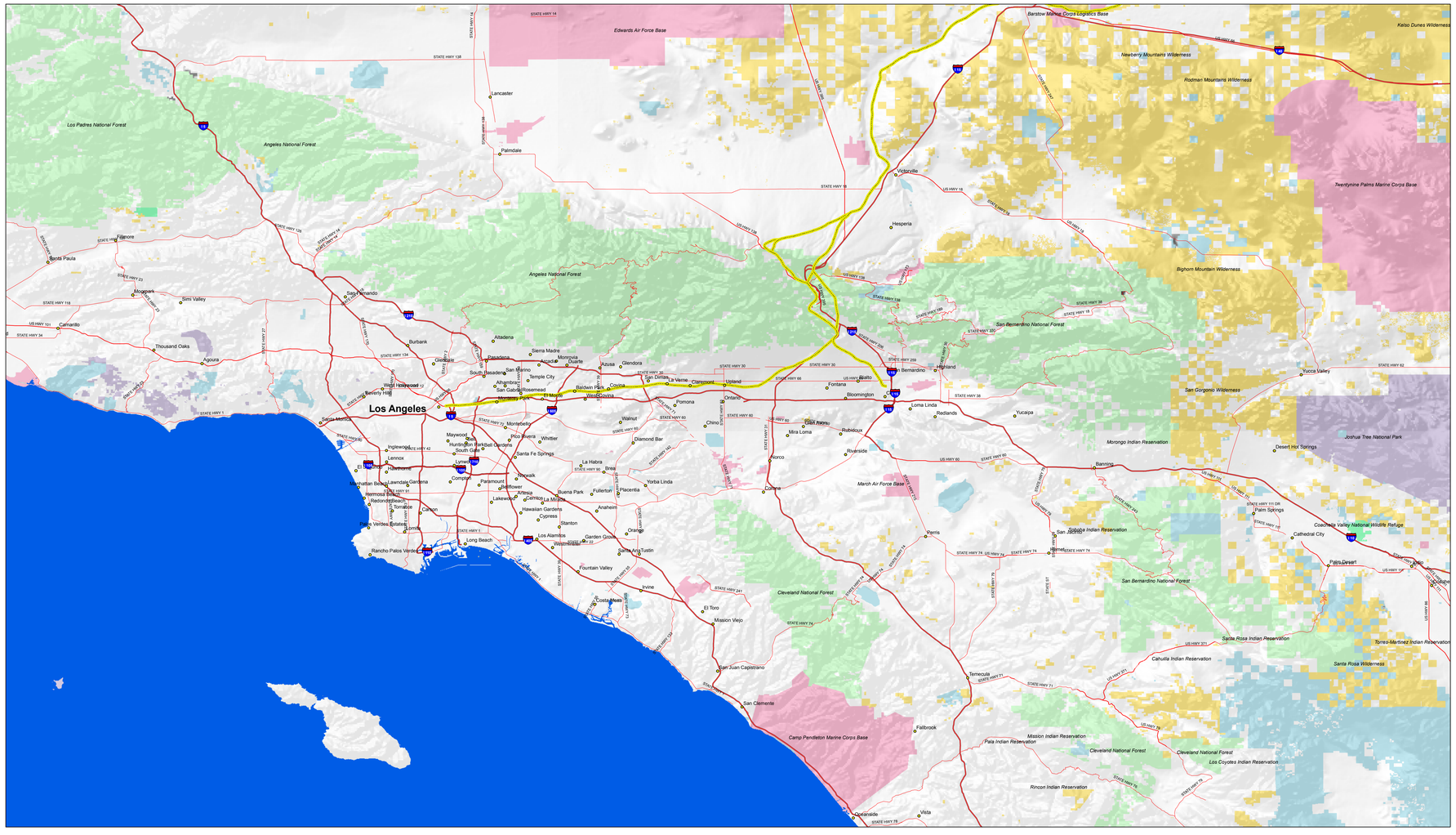
Old Spanish Trail Route

- Armijo & Mojave Routes
- Armijo & Northern Routes
- Armijo Route
- Mojave Road
- North Branch
- Northern Route

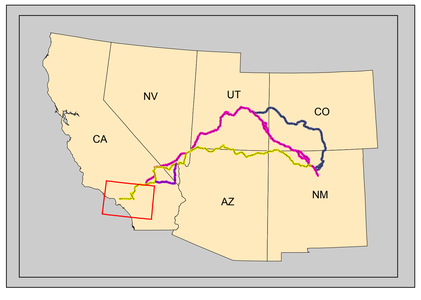
- Bureau of Land Management
- Dept. of Defense
- Other Federal
- National Park Service
- Private
- State
- Forest Service
- Tribal
- Fish & Wildlife Service

- State Boundary
- State Highway
- US Highway
- Interstate Highway
- River
- Water Body

Old Spanish National Historic Trail
Los Angeles, California Public Scoping Meetings
May 11, 2006



Location of Main Map



0 10 20 30 40 50 Miles

0 20 40 60 80 100 Kilometers

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Acc uracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.

Map produced on March 27, 2006

Old Spanish Trail Route

- Armijo & Mojave Routes
- Armijo & Northern Routes
- Armijo Route
- Mojave Road
- North Branch
- Northern Route

- Bureau of Land Management
- Dept. of Defense
- Other Federal
- National Park Service
- Private
- State
- Forest Service
- Tribal
- Fish & Wildlife Service

- State Boundary
- State Highway
- US Highway
- Interstate Highway
- River
- Water Body